

INSTEP

THE NEWSLETTER
OF STEPPINGSTONE
A PROGRAM OF ECH
EVERY CHILD'S HOPE
SPRING 2015

Debora Lake Receives National Spirit of Alliance Award

Some are graduation pictures with beaming smiles in a cap and gown. Some have a proud mom holding her adorable chubby-cheeked baby. But the one thing every picture has in common is that it represents a young person who found success because of Debora. For over 30 years Debora has helped the homeless and at-risk youth in our Steppingstone program learn the skills necessary to achieve independent living. Whether it's explaining the importance of budgeting, teaching proper interview etiquette, or helping youth grow in self-respect and confidence, Debora has changed hundreds of lives.

One life was Selena Vaughn, a former client in the Steppingstone program and now an ECH board member. Selena wrote the words below to nominate Debora for the national Spirit of Alliance Award. This award is presented by the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, which is a national organization of which ECH is a member. The award recognizes an individual's direct service to clients, commitment to her organization, and dedicated service to children, families, and communities. Debora dedicated her award to all the resilient youth in Steppingstone.



[Debora and Selena at the Alliance National Conference.]



"Growing up in foster care you are often labeled from the start, and there aren't very many people who are willing to look beyond your circumstances and recognize that you have the potential to be more than just a case number or another child/teen in their program; that you, in spite of your circumstances, have the ability to succeed and that all you need is support, guidance, and someone who genuinely cares. This is Debora Lake."

Last October Debora flew to Pittsburgh to accept her award . . . and who was there to surprise her? Selena! There is no one more deserving than Debora, and the ECH staff was thrilled to plan a surprise party to congratulate Debora on her much-deserved award!

- 2** Steppingstone Highlights
- 3** Letter from the CEO
- 4-5** Tributes & Memorials
- 6-7** Tributes & Memorials
- 8** Get to Know the ECH Board
- 9** ECH Foster Care & Steppingstone Grants
- 10** Hope for Tomorrow & Golf
- 11** Auxiliary Meeting
- 12** Staff Awards

RECENT HAPPENINGS Around Steppingstone

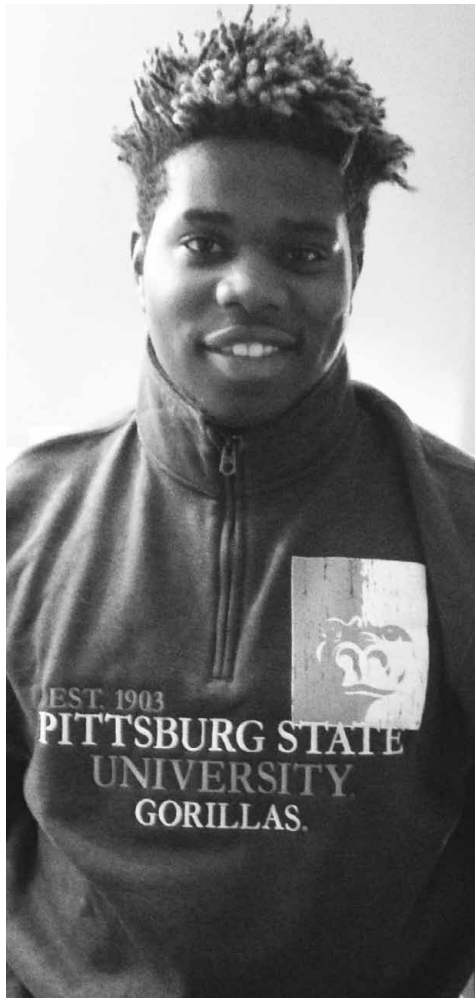
Shamari has been working various jobs and attending a specialized school program in hopes of graduating in May. He recently purchased a car with his own money, and is continuing to learn money management and budgeting skills. Looking to the future, Shamari is hoping to either attend a university upon graduation, or transition to a community apartment.

Jessica recently obtained her driver's permit—a huge accomplishment!

When she first came to Steppingstone, she was guarded and tended to isolate herself from peers and staff. She has recently become more involved in her program and also signed up for a swimming and life guard class. Jessica explains her change is because she was afraid at first, not knowing what it would be like to live with so many strangers (Jessica lives in the girls group home). But since the staff have helped with meeting her basic needs, she is feeling more confident.

David is attending high school and is working at a veterinary office, where he is responsible for walking and feeding the animals that are boarded there. Despite struggles in other areas of his life, David has continued to be responsible at work and loves his job.

Stephanie is working as a part-time CNA (Certified Nurses Assistant) in Missouri while also working on her certification in Kansas. She is working toward her goal of becoming an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) by enrolling in classes at Longview Community College. She is doing all of this while also parenting her two children, ages 10 months and two years.



[Shamari]

LEARNING Through Loss

Most of the Steppingstone youth are well acquainted with loss in their young lives. Whether it's losing a stable family structure, or losing their housing, many youth aren't equipped with the skills to adapt to loss. Recently, one Steppingstone employee who worked overnight in the girls group home left ECH. The worker, Jennifer, said goodnight to one of the girls, Emily, on her last shift. A short while later another employee, Shelly, found Emily in her room crying, having a hard time with Jennifer leaving. Emily explained how she felt like she was all alone. Shelley reassured Emily that the staff was there to support her and went on to explain how people come in and out of our lives and often leave footprints of some kind to remind us of their influence in our lives. Shelley explained how Jennifer crossed paths with Emily for a reason and she was clearly able to see Emily's potential to be anything she wanted to be. Now Emily just needed to believe that for herself.

Shelly reminded Emily that failing is not an option. Staff has so little time to teach the youth all they need to know to be successful on their own, which is why they push the kids so hard. Even though the youth might fall down and stumble time after time, that only makes them stronger in the long run. Shelly encouraged Emily to form relationships with people who have a positive influence and will fuel Emily's internal drive to want to succeed.

Shelly's words of wisdom helped Emily calm down and she was asleep a short while later, encouraged that even though she would miss Jennifer, the rest of the staff would be there to love and support her as she works to achieve independence.

STEPPINGSTONE CLIENT GIVES BACK

Last January Steppingstone client Tina left to attend Lincoln University in Jefferson City. She recently reached out to her Care Manager to ask if she could stay at Steppingstone during Spring Break, since the dorms will be closed and she didn't have any other options. While she is staying the week at Steppingstone, Tina volunteered to talk about life skills related to future college experiences clients can prepare for.

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PART OF A FAIRYTALE: The Impact of ECH For One Brave Young Woman

As the CEO of Every Child's Hope, it is sometimes easy to overly focus on the daily grind of the complex business functions, contractual obligations, strategy directions, and numerous organizational challenges that we face in order to deliver high-quality services to children and families.



In the last several years ECH has intentionally expanded our community-based service array to increase our positive impact and footprint in the various communities we serve. We are challenged as an organization to ensure that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing and that we are all moving in the same direction to meet the ever-increasing needs of the clients we are called to serve. If we aren't careful, we can sometimes lose sight of the real reason we do what we do every day.

Recently, I had an experience that compelled me to reflect on this very important dynamic. I had just returned from some time away from the office and was going through my mail. The very first piece of mail I spotted was handwritten and addressed to me as the CEO.

The letter was written by a young lady in our St. Louis Steppingstone Program, which is a service designed to assist older youth (frequently homeless) to learn life skills in order to eventually live successfully in the community. The following is an excerpt from that letter:

I am writing this letter to let you know that I am so grateful and thankful for this program. I could not be happier to be a part of it.

I am 18 and have a one year old son. I have been in this program since January of 2013.

I have been living in an on campus apartment (which I love) and recently moved off campus in an apartment which I love! I feel so blessed to be part of this program.

I believe that this program gives people a second chance and hope that everything will be okay.

I might not have it all and I am not rich, but I am so happy that I have a home to call my own. I just love this program and am so grateful and thankful to be part of this fairytale.

Well, I will admit that reading this letter and understanding the powerful impact of ECH's mission to assist others to reach their potential and fulfill hopes and dreams made me a little teary-eyed. It is a reminder to all of us who work at ECH and those who support us that we can make a real difference in the lives of others.

This young lady is currently working toward a nursing degree and has the chance to have it all and be rich in ways that she might not have ever been able to imagine. I am proud that ECH is part of giving her opportunities and best of all, hope.

This is why we do what we do every day!

Chief Executive Officer, Every Child's Hope



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[Hail]

RON HAIL joined the Board in 2011.

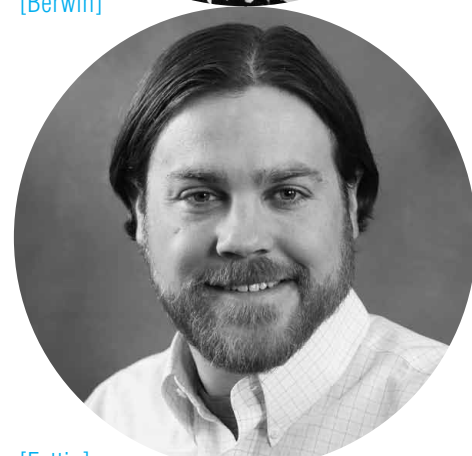
Hail is Co-Owner and Vice President of CRH Transportation, responsible for New Business Development Sales and Marketing. His knowledge as a small business owner has been a great asset to his Board leadership. As a committee member of our Golf Committee for more than thirteen years, Hail is dedicated to the mission of Every Child's Hope. In his free time Hail enjoys classic sports cars, flying, investing, and foreign travel.



[Berwin]

FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED IN 2014

REGINA L. BERWIN is no stranger to Every Child's Hope. Her father, grandfather, and great-grandfather have all served on the Board before her. Berwin is President of Berwin Insurance Agency, Inc., an affiliate of CJ Thomas. Her knowledge of both the insurance industry and technology, along with her extensive volunteer fundraising experiences will greatly benefit Board leadership. In her free time Berwin enjoys creative projects such as gardening and jewelry making, and always makes time for her family, friends and the various adventures life brings.



[Fettig]

JEREMY FETTIG is also no stranger to Every Child's Hope, serving on the ECH Special Event Committee and new young friends group Hope for Tomorrow. Fettig is Vice President at Bremen Bank in St. Louis and brings an in-depth understanding of financial management and business acumen to the Board. An active member of Immanuel UCC, Fettig spends his free time with Jackie and their three beautiful children, Dylan, Quinn, and Logan.

SELENA VAUGHN, an IT Analyst at AT&T, is also a successful graduate from ECH's Steppingstone program. Vaughn has stayed involved with ECH over the years, speaking at fundraising events and mentoring youth in the Steppingstone program. Vaughn brings a unique client perspective to the Board that will be invaluable. Vaughn is the proud mother of daughter Chrystian, son Ty'Shon and is also a licensed foster parent.



[Vaughn]

SUSAN SHELTON joins the Board after retiring as an administrator for the state of Missouri Children's Division. Among other responsibilities, at one time Shelton served as ECH's licensing oversight specialist for the state. Prior to retiring, Shelton served as the St. Louis County Director for the Missouri Children's Division. Shelton brings a wealth of knowledge of the child welfare system on a state, regional and national level. With many leadership offers in the community after her retirement, we are honored Shelton chose to serve ECH.



[Shelton]

EVERY CHILD'S HOPE EXPANDS FOSTER CARE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Every Child's Hope provides foster care case management services to approximately 130 children and families in St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. We work with the children, biological families, foster families, potential adoptive families, and blood relatives to ensure that every child has a plan for a permanent place to live and grow up in their community.

With this in mind, Every Child's Hope expanded the foster care case management program to other areas of Missouri. On Oct. 1, 2014 we began providing this service to children and families in Cole County (Jefferson City) and Franklin County (Washington and Union). Initially we will serve 45 children and families in Cole County and 15 in Franklin County. This is a new service for these two regions and our hope is that in the future, Missouri will expand this contract to include more children and families.



MAJOR GRANTS SUPPORT KANSAS CITY STEPPINGSTONE

At ECH we rely on the generosity of the local community to help fund our programs. Our Kansas City Steppingstone Transitional Living Program is the lucky recipient of two major grants. Wal-Mart's State Giving program awarded \$25,000 last fall to aid the local community in ending youth homelessness.

“We are so grateful for the support from the Walmart Foundation through this generous grant,” said Kansas City Steppingstone Director Lynn Durbin. “The Steppingstone program helps young people achieve self-sufficiency by assisting them in the acquisition of independent living skills, which facilitate their reintegration into the community.”

“At the Walmart Foundation, we understand that organizations such as ECH Every Child's Hope are essential to building stronger communities. They share our values and are committed to helping youth in need live better,” said Anne Hatfield, Walmart Public Affairs spokeswoman.

Early this year ECH was honored to receive notification of a \$60,000 grant from the Missouri Housing Trust Fund. The goal of the fund is to help meet the housing needs of very low income families and individuals. The Missouri Housing Development Commission administers the Trust Fund, which provides funding for a variety of housing needs, such as homeless prevention; rehab or new construction of rental housing, rental assistance; and home repair. The grant award will provide rental assistance to the Steppingstone youth as they work toward achieving independence and becoming contributing residents in the local community.

[ECH employees Christine Balden, Eve Dyson, and Duane Lewis attend the grand opening of the Union office.]

MAKE A GIFT TO EVERY CHILD'S HOPE & RECEIVE INCOME THROUGH A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

By Sharon Fenoglio

A charitable gift annuity is a common life income plan for seniors. It may be funded with cash or publicly traded securities of \$5,000 or more. In addition to your initial tax deduction, you and/or your spouse or designee receive lifetime fixed payments – a portion of which is tax-free. Your payment rate is based on the age or ages (if a second recipient is named) of the payment recipient(s) at the time the gift is made. When the gift annuity ends, the remaining assets are placed in the Reserve Fund at ECH Every Child's Hope for perpetuity.

BENEFITS OF A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY:

- Lifetime fixed payments (a portion of which is tax free) for you and/or your designee
- Charitable income tax deduction for a portion of your gift
- Reduction of capital gains tax if funded with appreciated securities
- Estate tax benefits
- Supports the mission of ECH Every Child's Hope

Sharon Fenoglio, Director of Development, would be happy to prepare a personalized calculation for you and answer any questions you may have regarding gift annuities or any other planned giving vehicle. Call her anytime at 314-427-3755 or email sfenoglio@echmail.org.

ECH EVERY CHILD'S HOPE Annual Golf Tournament!

Planning has begun for the 15th Annual Golf Classic that raises funds to support the work we do every day on behalf of children and families in need in our community.

Join us on **Monday, September 21, 2015** for the scramble held at the beautiful Old Hickory Golf Club in St. Peters, MO. Plenty of auction items, games on the course and great food and drinks will be on hand. Mr. Randy Karraker from ESPN 101.1 is once again serving as our honorary chair.

There are many opportunities to provide support in addition to purchasing a foursome such as hole sponsors, birdie sponsors, and if you don't play golf, you can still support by coming out for lunch and/or dinner.

This has been a very successful event for us and our guests have always really enjoyed the day. Most importantly, all of the funds raised that day go directly to support the work we do to help hurting children, youth and their families.

For more information please go to our website at everychildshope.org or contact our Associate Development Director Laura Kilcullin at lkilcullin@echmail.org.



[Honorary Chair Randy Karraker gets the tournament going!]

HOPE FOR TOMORROW... Every Child's Hope is You!

Hope for Tomorrow is a social organization of young professionals who care about children and want to serve and support the mission of ECH Every Child's Hope. Members enjoy a fun and social atmosphere while improving our community and participating in networking opportunities.

There are many benefits for Hope for Tomorrow members.

- Social gatherings to promote networking with other young professionals.
- Add to your resume.
- Special events geared for fun and to raise funds for ECH.
- Discounts for ECH special events, including Extend a Caring Hand Dinner and Golf Classic.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Dues are \$20 per year.

Check out Hope For Tomorrow's Facebook page at [Hope For Tomorrow St. Louis](https://www.facebook.com/HopeForTomorrowStLouis) or visit our webpage at www.everychildshope.org.

For more information, contact Laura Kilcullin at 314-427-3755 x231 or lkilcullin@echmail.org.

RECENT STEPPINGSTONE HIGHLIGHTS



The Steppingstone Auxiliary held their quarterly meeting in which members donated much-needed household supplies. The donations exceeded the space in the meeting room and spilled out into the hallway, entrance way, and even to the sidewalk! A few youth helped unload the donations, and one young man commented, "Wow!

These churches must really want to help us because they are giving so much stuff that we need to live on our own!" Another one said, "I don't mind helping because they do a lot for all of us Steppingstone kids!" We are grateful for the support of the Auxiliary and all the other community partners who help support the youth as they work toward independent living. Your generosity does not go unnoticed!



STEPPINGSTONE:
A PROGRAM OF ECH EVERY CHILD'S HOPE
5100 NOLAND ROAD
KANSAS CITY, MO 64133

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. LOUIS, MO
PERMIT NO. 20

STAFF AWARDS

Staff longevity is rare in the social work field, but ECH is proud of the high number of staff who have invested significant time at our organization. The dedication of our staff is what sets us apart as a leader in the child welfare community. Last January the following staff members received service awards, acknowledging their milestone achievements.



KC Steppingstone employees
Elizabeth Linville (5 years), Richard
Medley (5 years), Glenn Yates (20 years),
Carol Wehmeyer (not pictured, 30 years)

